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NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS.

BERKELEY'S IDEALISM.

The outlines of Berkeley's doctrine may be stated briefly as follows: The individual experience is made up of "ideas." These ideas are inert, fleeting existences, which do not have an independent being of their own, but subsist only as they are perceived. They exist or have their reality in active, indivisible "substances" or "spirits," which act, and think, and perceive them. I know that I perceive such ideas—that is to say, I am directly conscious of my own spirit or mind. Since the essence of this spirit is to perceive and not to be perceived, I cannot have an idea of it; ideas, being passive and inert, cannot represent that which acts; but since I am conscious of my spirit I may be said to have a "notion" of it. Further, I may reason by analogy that other men have spirits of which they are conscious, for, though I cannot directly perceive these other spirits—that is, cannot have an idea of them—yet I perceive certain combinations of ideas which lead me to infer that particular agents or spirits like myself accompany such combinations of ideas and perceive them. Therefore I have a notion of other spirits as well as of my own. In like manner I am conscious of relations which exist between ideas and spirits. I am aware of a relation between my mind perceiving and the ideas which it perceives; and I may be said to have a notion of this relation, though I do not have an idea of it. Ideas, spirits, and relations, then, make up the whole extent of human knowledge. Furthermore, many of my ideas are not the product of my own activity, but are given to me from without, and I have no control whatever over them. Some other spirit, then, must be their cause. This cannot be a finite spirit like my own, for it would have no more power to cause ideas than I have. Therefore the cause of my ideas must be an infinite, divine spirit. They exist in my spirit as a result of God's spirit. In God they have a permanent existence by virtue of his own infinite power. Lastly, the soul or spirit must be naturally immortal, because, being indivisible, incorporeal, and unextended, it cannot be subject to the changes which affect the body.

Bearing in mind this summary of the leading points of Berkeley's doctrine, let us see how far his results are logically deduced from the princi-

ples with which he sets out ; and how far, if at all, Berkeley has failed to develop adequately the germs of his theory.

In the first place, Berkeley starts by positing the existence of ideas, which mean, as the earlier portions of his work would imply, merely momentary sensations. Then, since these sensations are perceived, there must be an active, causal agent or spirit—which is something entirely different from passive, inert ideas—to perceive them. But why, from the mere existence of ideas, does the existence of an active spirit follow ? Why, from the fact that our experience is made up of a fleeting series of momentary sensations, does it follow that there must be a single, identical, permanent subject of these sensations ? Berkeley himself gives no logical answer. His only argument is an appeal to consciousness. But powers are not objects of consciousness. “A power,” says John Stuart Mill, “is not a concrete entity which we can perceive or feel, but an abstract name for a possibility.” The efficient power of which we are conscious is no more than a sensation, which is distinguished from our other sensations or ideas merely by coming before them. Upon Berkeley’s theory we should have no assurance that the spirit of one moment was the spirit of the next. If experience is made up of momentary sensations, each of which implies the existence of a spirit to perceive it, what reason is there for assuming the identity of any spirit over an interval ? What right have we to say that the spirit which perceives the sensation of one moment is the same spirit as that which perceives the sensation of the next moment ? Berkeley would probably have said that just as we are directly conscious of the spirit, so we are also conscious of its permanence. This is true ; we are conscious of its permanence ; or rather we are conscious of it as permanent ; but this is as much as to say that consciousness is not detached and momentary, as Berkeley makes it. In fact, we are never conscious that we are feeling, but only that we have felt ; we are never conscious that we *are* conscious, but only that we have been so. There is no present moment of consciousness. Look for it, and it is already past. “Consciousness,” says Hodgson, “is like a man walking backward, who does not see each step as he takes it, but only immediately after it has been taken.” Now, upon Berkeley’s theory it would be absurd to say that any of these past consciousnesses are ours ; or, in other words, it would be absurd to say that any consciousness is ours. We could not be conscious of self at all if our life could be made up of momentary, individual experiences, unrelated to each other. There must, then, be an element in cognition which Berkeley ignores.

The fact is that, in positing the reality of our ideas—that is, the reality of the world around us as we experience it and know it—Berkeley posits

more than he is aware of. He is right in positing this; he is right in recognizing that the world exists only as perceived, but he failed to recognize the part which thought plays in this perception of the world. The world of ideas is the only real world, but it is such by virtue of the relations of thought. If our ideas are only fleeting, single sensations, without permanence or bond of union, then, from the world which they compose, all relation disappears. Thus Berkeley's premises would not allow him to recognize the existence of relations, but yet he cannot move a step without tacitly recognizing them. He cannot even get out of his world of ideas—of his mere sensations—without arbitrarily supposing that these ideas imply—that is, are related to—a subject which perceives them. He saw that his doctrine would destroy spirit as well as matter, unless he admitted the existence of something which was not an idea—a spirit which perceived, but was not perceived in turn; and so he felt the necessity of admitting the existence of relations—namely, the relation which the perceived ideas bear to the perceiving spirit, and of which we may have a notion, though not an idea. In this way Berkeley stumbled upon his distinction between idea and notion. In his introduction on abstract ideas he says that universality does not consist in the absolute positive nature or conception of anything, but in the relation it bears to the particulars signified or represented by it. Here he recognizes that relation constitutes the universality of ideas. In the second edition of his "Principles" he was even led to recognize relation as a third kind of existence, the knowledge of which is given to us by a notion, as we have just seen above. Thus the natural course of his thought leads him to see that his idea implies something more than mere feeling, that cognition is more than momentary, that the concept or thought-element plays a prominent part in our knowledge of the world. But his adoption of the notion was an after-thought, and he never pushed it to its legitimate consequences; he never remodelled his earlier theory in the light of his new discovery. If Berkeley had recognized the full importance and significance of the thought-element at the beginning of his work, he might have understood, as Green says, by the *percipi* to which he called *esse* equivalent, definitely the *intelligi*. If he had known how much he really posited when he posited his world of ideas, he would have been saved from his inconsistencies and contradictions.

What, then, is the full significance of that thought element in cognition at which Berkeley only hinted? What is the true ground of our knowledge of self? In positing the world which we know, we posit something more than mere limited, independent, individual experiences. Each of our experiences has a meaning for us only in relation to the whole of

which it is a part. To know the part we must recognize its conformity to the whole. Each part implies the whole. Existence is not, as Berkeley would make it, a state which depends upon a single relation to an individual mind, but it is position in a rational, unified system. What Berkeley calls knowledge is, in fact, no knowledge at all, for the mere perception of single objects is nothing by itself; it becomes knowledge only by being referred to something not perceived—only by being subject to a universal law known by the understanding.

The function of such laws of the understanding is precisely what Berkeley overlooked in his earlier days. He felt the need of this thought-function in his later time, and, as we have seen, even caught a glimpse of its significance; but he never saw its full bearing upon his system. These laws of the understanding are what have been improperly termed "innate ideas." They are the necessary forms of thought which the mind imposes upon its sensations. They make knowledge possible, but are possessed by the mind only so far as they act upon the sensations. If not in operation, they are nothing. But given the data of sensation, and these forms of the understanding—these antecedent conditions of experience enable us to view the world as a rational whole, and to recognize the relations in which each single datum of experience stands to this rational whole of which it is an insignificant yet necessary part.

Having seen the true significance of the thought-element in cognition, we understand why Berkeley's neglect of it led to inconsistencies in his theory. His great step was made when he shook off the old notion which had been Locke's fundamental idea—namely, that the world first exists, and then is thought of. He was the first to discern the truth that the world really exists only so far as it is thought of. But, having advanced thus far upon the right road, he was blinded by the ambiguity of his term "idea," and, failing to recognize the true meaning of thought, stumbled, and lost his way. He makes idea mean a single, momentary experience, and thus confuses thought and sensation. He does not see that there is anything more in cognition than mere single, detached sensations. The permanent thought-element escapes him entirely for the time. As Green says, "Berkeley failed to distinguish the true proposition, 'there is nothing real apart from thought,' from this false one, its virtual contradictory, 'there is nothing other than feeling.'" He "merged both thing and idea in the indifference of simple feeling." If he had recognized that the idea was real by being thought, and not merely by being felt, he would not have held that knowledge consists only of individual, momentary ideas. If he had recognized the forms of thought as the antecedent conditions of experience, he would not have been obliged to posit a spirit for

the subsistence of his ideas; for then he would have seen that the spirit—the self-conscious subject—is the first and highest form of all experience. It is true that the world of ideas implies a thinking subject, but it is not true that a fleeting succession of ideas implies such a subject, which is substantially what Berkeley posits. If we recognize that relation constitutes the nature of ideas, we see that ideas are real in so far as they are related; that therefore the world is real because it exists in relation to a thinking subject. It is true that the thinking subject also implies the existence of the world; we are conscious of self only by envisaging something which is not self, to which the self stands in a necessary relation. It is by this synthetic principle of thought—the principle that each part of existence implies all other parts—that we come to know both world and ego as existing each for the other. Each is real because it stands in a necessary relation to the other. Berkeley overlooks this synthetic principle when he regards the world as a mere succession of separate sensations; but, as I have shown above, he tacitly recognizes it when he asserts that each of these single sensations implies a relation to a perceiving subject. But his neglect of this principle in the material world makes his recognition of it in the connection of world and mind useless, and drives him to an appeal to the testimony of consciousness in support of his theory of mind.

We are now in a position to see why the appeal to consciousness, as to its self-identity, is not valid, according to Berkeley's method. First, in regard to the identity of ideas. Berkeley makes coherence one test of the reality of ideas. But what right has he to assign coherence to a fleeting series of experiences? Coherence in sensations implies a permanent element in those sensations. Berkeley recognized this in so far as he saw that certain sensations come back in the same form whenever perceived, and consequently must have remained in existence in some other mind; but he failed to see that the sensations of one moment are not the same as those of a past moment, but only similar to them, and that what has been kept in existence is a law, by virtue of which similar sensations will again occur under similar conditions. Thus the permanent element in sensations is a law, and all coherence must depend upon such law. Mere succession of feelings cannot be called coherence, for coherence can be affirmed only of a system of relations. Thus it is with the permanence or identity of consciousness. A fleeting succession of single sensations can not imply, as we have seen, the existence of a thinking subject. Far less can they imply the existence of a permanent subject which is identical with itself over an interval of time. For such identity can be known only by a consciousness of the relations which the subject bears to

the rational whole of existence. Berkeley is driven to account for the permanence of ideas and spirits by the theory that God ordains such an order, or by the theory of continuous creation.

The neglect of the synthetic principle of thought is again evident in the weakness of Berkeley's argument for immortality. Since the soul is indivisible, incorporeal, and unextended, he says, it cannot be subject to the changes which affect the body, and must, therefore, be immortal. But, as Green points out, if being unextended constitutes immortality, then sounds and smells must be immortal. And, even though the fact that a series of sensations are not influenced by time may prove them endless, it does not follow from this that they possess an immortal soul, for the being of a soul needs something more for its constitution than a mere series of sensations; it needs the presence of a thinking subject which is identical with itself through time. Such a subject, as we have seen, the synthetic principle that one part of experience implies all other parts makes possible. Upon such a principle, and upon such a principle alone, can we rationally found a doctrine of immortality.

As Berkeley infers the existence of his own spirit from the existence of his ideas, so from the existence of his own spirit he infers the existence of others in the world around him. Since we have a notion of ourselves as spirits, and have ideas of bodies which move as if they were controlled by like spirits, we infer the existence of such spirits. This bald inference becomes an induction amounting to certainty when we consider that the beings which we call our fellow-men stand in the same relation to the universe as we ourselves stand, and that, if we do not conceive of them as embodying a self-conscious subject, we cannot conceive the whole of the universe to be a rational whole.

Berkeley solves the problem of extension by reducing the idea of extension to a series of single sensations. He thus gets rid of extension as a relation between ideas, or, in other words, gets rid of it entirely, for the only meaning of extension is a relation between ideas. If extension is equivalent only to a series of single sensations, there is no one moment at which it can be said to exist, for no two parts of a series can exist at the same time. If Berkeley had recognized the true function of the understanding, he would have seen that extension was not a sensation or a series of sensations, but such a relation between ideas as can be thought of apart from all sensation; and that, far from being the result of sensations, it is one of the antecedent conditions which make sensations possible, and form them into what we call knowledge. The infinite divisibility of extension, then, no longer troubles us. If extension were made up of a series of sensations, it could not be infinitely divided, because sensations cannot

be infinitely small; but, since it is not made up of a series of sensations—since it is a form of the mind—it is ideal, and therefore potentially capable of infinite divisibility, though not actually capable of such divisibility for our experience.

Berkeley posits a God still more arbitrarily than he posits finite spirits. We are conscious of our own active power, and we are also conscious of possessing ideas over which we have no control. The source of these must, then, be some other active power. All those ideas which are not the product of finite spirits must be the effect of an infinite spirit. The world—that is, the sum of those primary qualities of which Locke made matter the substance—must have a single, self-conscious subject as its cause. But, even if we are conscious of our own activity, what right have we to infer from this another activity of which we are not conscious? Since we cannot have an idea of this activity, we might turn against it Berkeley's own argument against the existence of matter, in which he says that it makes no difference to us whether such a matter exists or not, if we can have no idea of it. He would admit that we could have no idea of God, but he would not admit for an instant that his existence was a matter of indifference to us. He would say that, if we do not have an idea of God, we at least have a *notion* of him. Why, then, have we not a notion of matter? The fact is, that we do have a notion of matter, and, in denying this, Berkeley cut away the only logical props of the spiritualism that he sought to uphold. We have a notion of matter as "a basis of intelligible relations." Locke came nearer the truth than Berkeley in his doctrine of a deity when he said that the world was a system of relations, and as such must have a present and eternal subject of those relations. But Berkeley, having made his world a series of single sensations, of which the only logical subject would be a mere "feeling substance," finds himself driven, in his zeal for an intelligent deity, to posit arbitrarily an infinite activity as the cause of the world of his experience. Berkeley sees that such a being must be in relation to the world. Thus relation comes to him as an after-thought, and he says that we must have a *notion* of the deity. This strikes nearer the truth. If we start with relation, if we recognize that every idea—or, better, every thing—has its nature, not in sensation, but in relation, then we see that the universe is a rational whole, implying the power of an eternal consciousness; we see that an intelligible world can exist only in relation to a self-conscious subject, and that the condition of our knowledge of such a world is the presence of that subject in us. Indeed, what is a rational whole but a universal reason—that is, God himself? "What I mean by God is the reason which meets me on every side, and is the law of my being."

To sum up the preceding argument, Berkeley's idealism is briefly this: I posit ideas, by which I mean sensations. They compose the world of my experience. But I find that something more is necessary to knowledge; the world would be annihilated if sensations were all that existed, and so I infer spirits which feel the sensations. I am directly conscious of my own spirit, and therefore have a right to infer that other men are conscious of their spirits. But this is not quite all that the world contains. I have ideas which are certainly not the products of my own spirit, because I have no control over them; nor can they be the product of the other finite spirits whose existence I have inferred, because they are spirits like my own, which can no more control their ideas than I can control mine. These ideas must, then, be the product of the activity of an infinite spirit—a self-conscious subject of the universe. Since I have inferred the existence of spirit, I must have some knowledge of spirit, and yet I am certain that I cannot have any idea of it. I do not *feel* it. It must be, then, that I am conscious of the relation which spirit bears to my sensations, and so have a *notion* of this relation. This notion is something very different from the knowledge which is given to me by my sensations or ideas.

The more rational idealist says: I posit ideas, by which I mean not merely sensations, but those data of knowledge which have two sides—a side of thought and a side of feeling—both of which are equally essential to ideas, and can be known only with reference to the rational whole of which they form essential parts. These ideas constitute the world of my experience. They are real for me, because the only test of reality is the test of relation. But what have I posited in positing ideas as the data of my knowledge? Obviously, not merely their *feeling* side, which is the element that the outer world contributes to them, but also their *thought* side, which is the element that I contribute to them. I have thus posited my own existence, and that of all beings which are capable of having similar ideas. But this is not all that I have posited. I have said that the condition of my having ideas is the fact that I recognize them to be parts of a rational whole. I have thus posited a rational whole in which these ideas exist—that is, I have posited a God in whom we see all things. *Vision in God* is the logical result of my premises. "We apprehend anything in so far as it is a manifestation of one permanent reason—all that we mentally are we see in God."

Berkeley was the discoverer of a great truth. The fact that he saw but a part of the consequences of his conception only illustrates how little any one mind, however gifted, is permitted to contribute to the progress of human thought. The great problems of the world are too vast to find

completion within the narrow limits of a single intelligence. But, if Berkeley advanced only a short way upon the right road, he pointed out to his successors the way which they should follow, and at the present day mankind are still working under Bishop Berkeley's guidance.

CHARLES WESLEY BRADLEY.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., June, 1880.

THE CONCORD SUMMER SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY.

JULY AND AUGUST, 1881.—This institution seems to have been still more successful the past season than the first: the attendance nearly doubled, and receipts from fees proportionate. A gift from Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson enabled the managers to build a hall for the better accommodation of the school. The following circular gives all details necessary to answer inquirers. We published last year's programme in this Journal for January, 1880.

THE CONCORD SUMMER SCHOOL will open for a third term on Monday, July 11, 1881, at 9 A. M., and will continue five weeks. The lectures in each week will be eleven; they will be given morning and evening, except Saturday evenings, on the six secular days (in the morning at 9 o'clock, and in the evening at 7.30), at the *Hillside Chapel*, near the Orchard House.

The terms will be \$3 for each of the five weeks, but each regular student will be required to pay at least \$10 for the term, which will permit him to attend during three weeks. The fees for all the courses will be \$15. Board may be obtained in the village at from \$6 to \$12 a week, so that students may estimate their *necessary* expenses for the whole term at \$50. Single tickets, at 50 cents each, will be issued for the convenience of visitors, and these may be bought at the shop of H. L. Whitcomb, in Concord, after July 1, 1881, in packages of *twelve* for \$4.50, of *six* for \$2.50, and of *three* for \$1.25. It is expected that the applications for course tickets will exceed the number which can be issued. Any one to whom this circular is sent can now engage tickets by making application, and sending with the application \$5 as a guaranty. For those who make this deposit, tickets will be reserved till the first day of July, 1881, and can then be obtained by payment of the balance due. Course tickets at \$15 will entitle the holders to reserved seats, and \$10 tickets will entitle to a choice of seats after the course ticket holders have been assigned seats.

All students should be registered on or before July 1, 1881, at the office of the Secretary in Concord. No preliminary examinations are required, and no limitation of age, sex, or residence in Concord will be prescribed; but it is recommended that persons under eighteen years should not present themselves as students, and that those who take all the courses should reside in the town during the term. The Concord Public Library, of 16,000 volumes, will be open every day for the use of residents. Students, coming and going daily during the term, may reach Concord from Boston by the Fitchburg Railroad, or the Middlesex Central; from Lowell, Andover, etc., by the Lowell and Framingham Railroad; from Southern Middlesex and Worcester Counties, by the same road. The Orchard House stands on the Lexington road, east of Concord village, ad-